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How to approach the role of small ruminant production in poverty reduction and livelihood- Proposal of a methodological guide

Véronique Alary, Céline Dutilly-Diane
(CIRAD)

Abstract:

Many research or development studies underline the crucial role of small ruminant (SR) activities in the non tropical dry areas of world, and in particular in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region. With camels, they are considered as key components of production systems over much of this vast region, which is characterized by water scarcity and erratic rainfall. SR activities may constitute the main remunerative activity or at least a pillar to ensure the viability of a large number of families in the region, particularly in remote areas. Some studies proposed to estimate the monetary contribution of SR activities in the household net income. But few studies analyze the contribution of SR activity in terms of poverty reduction and livelihood improvement. The reasons are numerous but one of them is the difficulty to apprehend the multiple and complex contributions of livestock activity to the household economy through their direct and indirect products, the intra-annual and inter-annual rhythm of production, the particular status of animal between capital-treasury-saving-social asset...

“Despite its potential importance to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction, livestock sector development has received limited attention from the international donor community and national governments in recent years” (Alive platform).

Within the Alive Platform, partnership for livestock development, poverty alleviation and sustainable growth for Africa, the Alive secretary, PPLPI (FAO), CIRAD and WB join their effort to develop a methodological Guide to the appropriate inclusion of the livestock sector in poverty reduction policies or agenda.

In this communication, we propose to present an overview of the content of this Livestock and Poverty guide..

1. The origin of the guide

“The contrast between livestock’s importance and its scant recognition by national policy makers and donors is due to several factors such as a the lack of a common vision for the sector’s development (focused on the livestock keepers and human development and not on animal performances), the dearth of reliable data to quantify and demonstrate payoffs from livestock sector investment, and a lack of capacity to develop appropriate sector plans and policies”.

In 2002, the Partnership for Livestock Development, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Growth for Africa (ALive) was initiated by the World Bank. It is a regional partnership based on a multi-stakeholders Platform to reposition the African livestock sector¹ into the development agendas of the

¹ Livestock sector is to be understood in the broad sense dealing from natural resources management to public health issues (zoonoses, food safety), including animal production and animal health.

national, regional and international policy makers, by emphasizing its crucial impacts in terms of poverty alleviation and sustainable economic growth and its overall contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Under the category of analytical support and operational assistance, two diagnostic studies named "Livestock Poverty Growth Initiatives" (Initiatives Elevage Pauvreté Croissance - IEPC) or first generation Livestock-PRSP were conducted in Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

Based on these experiences, the ALive Executive Committee decided to develop a methodology to guide livestock sector-poverty interaction studies and the preparation of subsequent action plans that ensure appropriate inclusion of the livestock sector in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers was deemed to be a priority for the ALive partnership. The objective is to sustainably strengthen national capacities to carry out social, economic and prospective diagnoses of the sector on which to formulate suitable strategic action plans.

Livestock poverty growth diagnosis and action plan ('Livestock PRSPs') will provide an evidence base that underlines the importance and potential of the livestock sector in fighting poverty and improving national economic growth thus providing national ministries responsible for public investments and donors with convincing reasons for sector investment and PRSP integration.

The use of the methodology therefore not only provides the required evidence base (in the 'Livestock poverty growth diagnosis and action plan') but will also lead to the integration of this evidence into the national debate on development priorities.

The target audience for this methodology is national planning teams composed of a representative cross-section of public, private and tertiary actors (civil society) from the livestock sector and other related organizations and institutes. It is also expected that the methodology will be of use to staff of development agencies and civil society. The time horizon of the resultant strategies and action plans are not expected to exceed 5 years, in line with the normal PRSP planning process (Alive, 2007).

2. The Guide content

The methodological guide is structured in 6 modules (figure 1). Each module is composed of sub-modules, activities, and steps. Specific tools (excel spreadsheets models, survey questionnaires, example of terms of references, etc.) are proposed to support the realization of activities when necessary. These tools are simplified version of existing models or have been developed specifically for this methodological Guide. When possible, tools and materials have been illustrated with examples.

Module 1- Initial assessment: *an initial understanding of the importance of the livestock sector and the links between livestock and poverty*

The objective of this module is to conduct a rapid assessment of the potential advantages offered by the livestock sector in supporting the poor population of the country. This initial assessment will constitute a basis to determine if a more complete analysis of the livestock sector is necessary in order to support the current PRSP or national poverty strategies in achieving their objective in alleviating poverty. If this is confirmed, then Module 1 will lead directly to the next modules.

The sub-modules composing this initial module provide for:

- an initial understanding of the importance of the livestock sector and the links between livestock and poverty based on existing documents and data sets.

- An evaluation on how the livestock sector is currently taken into account in the PRSP or national poverty alleviation strategies.

Module 2 - Coalition of change: *a strong network of like-minded actors creating a movement for the appropriate inclusion of the livestock sector in PRSP/PRSC processes.*

This second module has been conceived to support the constitution and the mobilisation of a national team/ committee of experts that will be in charge of realizing the diagnosis of the livestock sector (Modules 3 and 4). In addition, this module is a guide for the establishment of a coalition of partners that will manage and promote the necessary policy and institutional changes to guarantee the integration of the livestock sector in the DRSP process. The multi institutional composition of this coalition should insure as well that the livestock sector is adequately articulated with the other sectors of the economy.

This module is critical to approach the development of a strategic and/or action plan (Module 5). The establishment of the coalition is a mean to facilitate the elaboration of participative policies. Conventional approaches - leaving strategic decisions to the leaders and practitioners – are susceptible to have little impacts. Therefore, it is necessary to build partnerships and promote exchange networks of knowledge.

This module is therefore composed of 4 sub-modules, representing the steps of this coalition formation:

- The establishment of a team of experts and a committee of partners
- An assessment of the policy context
- The identification and characterisation of key actors and institutions
- The diffusion of information

Module 3- Livestock in household economy: *where and to whom livestock is a livelihood priority.*

This module is focusing on livestock and production systems and furnishes the necessary tools to identify these systems, assess their performances along the supply chain and identify the development options for a shared growth. In addition, this module proposes some tools for assessing current policies, legislations and institutions according to the constraints faced by the households. These analyzes are important to help targeting the actors and identify investment and policy options.

To resume, this module's objectives are therefore to:

- Precise the roles and places of livestock in household economies.
- Identify different social strata of livestock-dependent poor
- Identify the risks and risk factors susceptible to increase households vulnerability
- Assess the direct and indirect impacts of livestock activities along the supply chain
- Understand the relative influence of institutional and policies constraints as perceived by households
- Identify the development pathways to secure and improve the contribution of livestock in household economies and consequently their livelihoods.

To address these objectives, a 4 steps approach has been developed:

1. Identifying (production system typology) farm types having similar production functions and production techniques (cropping system * livestock farming system) and which are therefore likely to have the same concerns as to living conditions, the same socioeconomic constraints, and similar development paths.
2. Evaluating the technical performances of each livestock production system based on husbandry practices and demographic parameters (mortality, fecundity,...)

3. Calculating the order of magnitude of the contribution of livestock farming to households' agricultural income and determine the degree of variation and the degree of diversity of the contribution for a given farm type.

4. Quantitative and qualitative approaches of the levels of poverty by studying:

- both the positive and the negative deviations between households' agricultural income and the poverty line determined in the national documents defining the strategy for alleviating poverty
- indicators concerning the extent to which households' dietary needs are covered

Different qualitative and quantitative indicators related to different components of the vulnerability are suggested in link with:

- Entrusting networks and redistribution of the herd
- Sanitary risks and access to veterinary inputs
- Credit and burden of debt
- Access to local, regional, and international markets
- Access to water and resources
- Access to basic social services

To have a good representation of the role and place of livestock in the poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement, the main challenge resides in combining different indicators in order to take into consideration the complex status of animals within the farm.

The guide proposes some tools and methods to interpret existing household income and livelihood data or to identify the existing rapid survey methodologies to collect such data to enable the differentiation of social strata of livestock dependent poor. However the main problem often remains the availability of reliable data in the livestock sector.

Through its different sub-modules (analysis of production systems, analysis of the commodity chain, assessment of the organizations, policies, legislations and institutions by actors), this module will help establishing the reference situation and identify monitoring household indicators, and will furnish the technical and socio-economic indicators on which will rely the macro-economic diagnostic (module 4).

Module 4 - Livestock in the national economy: the importance to be given to livestock sector development as part of the national development strategy.

This module consists in considering the livestock sector at the macro-economic level. It furnishes the necessary tools to assess its direct and indirect contribution to the national economy (through the calculation of the livestock GDP), its contribution to the national feed security and to poverty reduction. In addition, the potential role of the livestock sector is analyzed given the possible supply/demand evolutions and constraints on feed resources.

This module is organized in three sub-modules:

- Livestock in the national economy
- Potentialities of the livestock sector
- Policies and institutions

Module 5 - Strategies and action plan: concrete, strategic livestock sector development plans and detailed investment proposals that lead to economic growth and poverty reduction.

This module uses the results of the diagnosis realized in modules 3 and 4 in order to elaborate a strategy and an action plan that are susceptible to be incorporated in the PRSP or other strategy and investment programs (integrated rural development programs, pro-poor investment programs, ...).

This module constitutes the final result of the methodological guide i.e a livestock-growth-poverty development plan composed of a diagnosis and its associated action plan.

Module 5 is composed of three steps consisting in:

- Synthesizing the results of the diagnosis
- Identifying the strategic objective and the actions
- Defining the modalities of implementation
- Realize an ex-ante impact assessment

Module 6 - Learning-based monitoring and evaluation: up-to-date information on the impact of the inclusion of the livestock sector in the PRSP on equitable wealth creation and sustainable economic growth.

This last module allows choosing key indicators to monitor the process of implementation of the action plan and the integration of the livestock sector in the PRSP or other interventions / programs. It is an essential component to support the long term development of the livestock sector and build the monitoring capacity within this sector.

Two sub-modules compose this final stage:

- The implementation of a monitoring system
- Support to the monitoring process

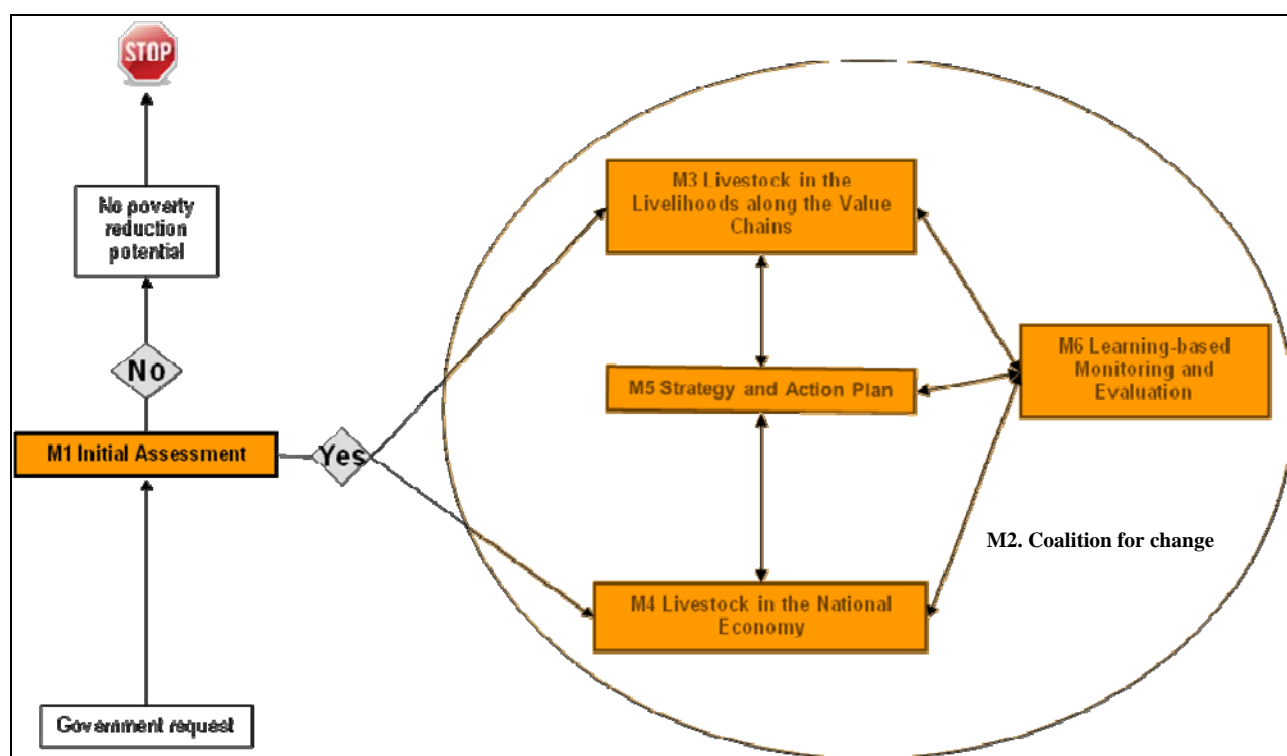


Figure 1: Content of the guide

3. Utilization of the Guide

The above modules have been presented independently, however their implementation process should be considered in an interactive way. The modules and sub-modules are linked to each others to form the complete Guide. In the diagnosis phase in particular (Modules 3 and 4), the outputs of one sub-module constitute the inputs of another one. Therefore the originality and the strength of this

methodological Guide reside in its faculty to aggregate and organize existing and generated information of the livestock sector at all scales: flock, farm/household, supply chain and country.

In addition, this methodological Guide has been developed in a flexible way so it can be easily adaptable to the context of various countries and to the objective fixed by the users (study of the whole livestock sector vs study of specific species or production systems).

This guide offers a great opportunity to revise livestock strategies and sector policies in a global way. However it is important to mention that the focus has been placed on the economic and social functions of the livestock sector. The environmental and health dimensions are not explicitly covered.

The guide mentions some environmental aspects in the indirect contribution of livestock to the national economy, but it is redirecting the users toward the Environment-Livestock toolbox developed by LEAD in order to go deeper in this area. The LEAD (Livestock, Environment and Development) initiative is an inter-institutional consortium with the secretariat located within FAO.

In the same way, the guide is not proposing to conduct an overall assessment of the livestock health sector and public health externalities as complete methodologies have been developed in other contexts. In particular, the guide is referring to the new tool for the evaluation of the performance of veterinarian services developed by OIE.

More information:

<http://www.alive-online.org/web/page/483/sectionid/340/pagelevel/3/parentID/351/interior.asp>